

PURCHASING UPDATE



Utah Division of Purchasing and General Services

Specifications – Needs vs. Wants

By Michael Glenn, Contract Analyst

Specifications for a project, be it for a good or service, can make or break a solicitation. A lot of times it seems easy to copy some specifications from a previous solicitation or write down the specifications of the exact model of equipment that you want, but this can lead to potential problems. They can be a major factor in slowing down the solicitation process and can be a significant contributor to protests. Sometimes the difference between a nightmare solicitation that never ends due to questions, clarifications, protests, etc. and a solicitation that goes as smooth as spreading butter on a piece of toast is the specifications. Overly specific specifications can cause prices for projects to be higher by not allowing for innovation and not utilizing the expertise of the experts.

So how do we get to the butter spreading specifications? To do this, here are three main questions you can ask yourself to help form silky smooth specifications:

1. What is my problem?
2. What are my needs?
3. What are my wants?

What is my problem? Many times we tend to make our “problem” more complicated than it actually is. This question isn’t meant to make you second guess yourself, but rather confirm that you’re thinking of the problem at the ground level. This could be the difference between thinking the problem is that you don’t have a riding lawnmower to cut the grass and looking at it as the problem being that you need a way to cut the grass.

What are my needs? This is the big one, the question that many of us like to bend. This question is meant to help you identify what are truly the base requirements to solve your problem. This is how we identify the parameters for projects as well. Examples of needs would be; a width requirement for a forklift to fit between permanent isles in a warehouse, or a special certification that a vendor

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needs to hold based on the specialized work being done. These are all the things that are required in order for the project to be completed successfully. Tie the needs back to the first question of the base problem to make sure you are addressing what exactly is needed to get the job done, nothing more.

What are my wants? Here comes the second list of “needs”. The wants are specifications that really don’t have a direct impact on the outcome of the problem. A lot of times the wants come across as overly specific requirements, but when you dig deeper you find that the overly specific specification could be broadened in order to encourage competition and is really there to steer towards a specific product or vendor. This is a major red flag that leads to protests and slower solicitations. The wants are the tricky group of specifications that we convince ourselves are needs. Some examples of wants

could be: requiring 12 windows into a body scanning machine when the real **need** is to be able to see inside as people move through, or requiring a tractor that has exactly 301 horsepower (hp) because the other brands machine is listed at 300 hp and the one you like is 301 hp. There is a way to factor in extra features or desires into a solicitation, but the specifications is not the place for them.

These questions may seem unhelpful or basic at first, but they are meant to assist in taking a step back and breaking down what we truly need to solve the problem at hand. Above all else, specifications are meant to promote competition and promote fairness in the procurement process. They are not meant to be used to steer towards certain vendors or items.

For questions, contact Michael Glenn, michaelglenn@utah.gov.

NARCAN: The Power to Save Lives that You Need to Know About

By Nick Hughes, Contract Analyst

Benjamin Franklin once said, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”, this of course was in reference to a fire that plagued Philadelphia in the early 1700s and their reactionary nature to fires as opposed to addressing fire hazards and safer practices beforehand.

We live in a day and age where we can gather information in a millisecond, you can actually become an expert on the above mentioned quote and history behind it in a matter of minutes and question its authenticity.

Unfortunately, no matter how much action we put into information gathering, research, prevention, etc., accidents will always happen and there will always be a need for a “pound of cure”, the goal is to reduce the need, but to have the cure as a last line of defense.

With the COVID-19 pandemic taking forefront in most health discussions, there are several monsters continuing under the radar that continue to take our loved ones from us.

The OPIOID crisis is here, it’s not going away, and it kills. In Utah, 437 drug overdose deaths involved opioids in 2018, to compare, as of August 30, 2020, COVID-19 has a death toll in the State of Utah of 407.

For us, right now, the prevention is the cure, they go hand in hand. That is not to say that we don’t stop education on drug use, hazards, risks, etc. but for the singular act of an overdose, knowing and having access to the cure, will save an individual and have a ripple effect throughout history.

Narcan is here, it’s the cure. Narcan is offered by a company

called Emergent Devices and no other company manufactures this product. Narcan nasal spray is a ready-to-use, needle-free device, which requires no assembly and there is no risk of a needle stick with this formulation (to the deliverer of the spray it lessens probability for disease transmission). It is user friendly and prior medical training is not required in order to administer Narcan nasal spray.

This nasal spray cure is available on our Statewide contract #PD3277 with Cardinal Health at a reduced rate. You may contact the Utah account rep, Janine Collette, at janine.collett@cardinalhealth.com or the MMCAP representative at the State of Utah, Nicholas Hughes at nhughes@utah.gov or 801-957-7141.

You may be asking, “Nick, I don’t need to use Cardinal Health, we have Adapt on state contract under PD2763, and Adapt offers Narcan”. Well my friends, knowledge is power. A few things have transpired behind the scenes. Adapt changed its name to Emergent Devices. Contract PD2763 expires August 31, 2020. The State of Utah will not be renewing this contract directly with Emergent Devices, “why you ask?” Because Emergent Devices is working directly with Cardinal Health who is already on contract.

If you, your Department, Division, or someone you know, needs this product, please share this information with them.

I hope this information helps save a life. If you have any questions, please contact me directly at nhughes@utah.gov.

Correction to the September
Newsletter Article—

Instructions on Contract Formation Between Two Utah Procurement Units

By Nick Hughes,
Contract Analyst

An article was published in September that I had written earlier this year which stated that government to government contracts, if above \$5,000, were required to be entered into FINET. In between the time of writing the newsletter article and publishing the article, the policy was updated to specifically exempt these agreements from this requirement. The new policy states, "Government-to-government contracts: Agreements of any kind where all parties involved are governmental entities are not required to be entered into FINET; however, entering such agreements into FINET does add internal controls for contract spend and is considered a best practice."

Request for Information

By Cat Turner, Purchasing Agent

As procurement professionals, we have all received an assignment to purchase something we know nothing about or maybe your end user has limited knowledge as well. It could be for goods or services, or perhaps you or your end user is familiar with the goods or services but are unsure of billing practices or how delivery is made. A Request for Information ("RFI") is a great way to gain insight about the goods, services, or industry practices from the vendors, what type of procurement should be used to procure the goods or services, and also generate interest in a future procurement.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Is it worth the time?

A: Definitely! I recommend completing a RFI up front rather than have to cancel a RFP or IFB mid process and start over.

Q: Can you ask for pricing?

A: Yes. recent changes to the Utah Procurement Code in the Legislative General Session 2020 allow us to ask for pricing information in a RFI. However, you will need to be careful with who sees the pricing information as future evaluation committee members in a RFP are generally still required to not see pricing information until after they have completed their technical evaluation.

Q: Can you enter into a contract from RFI?

A: No.

Q: Could you complete a second RFI process if you or your end users have additional questions?

A: Yes.

Q: Do vendors need to submit a claim of confidentiality?

A: No. A record containing information submitted to or by a governmental entity in response to a RFI is protected under UCA Section 63G-2-305. Subsection 7 also states that it does not restrict the right of a person to have access to the information, after:

- (a) A contract directly relating to the subject of the request for information has been awarded or signed by all parties; or
- (b) (i) a final determination is made not to enter a contract that relates to the subject of the request for information; and (ii) at least two years have passed after the day on which the request for information is issued;

Best Practices:

1. Take the time to put together a good background statement. It will give the vendors better context and will allow them to ask questions and provide a better response.
2. Make sure the RFI is posted for a reasonable amount of time to ensure vendors can submit a valuable response.
3. Research vendors in the industry and invite them to respond to the RFI.
4. Once your RFI process is complete and decide whether to proceed with a RFP or an IFB, that your specifications are not accidentally tailored to a any vendor. Specifications must be drafted with the objective of clearly describing the procurement unit's requirements and encouraging competition.

UTAH CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES

LET US HELP YOU STAY SAFE...



EMBROIDERED AND SCREEN PRINTED FACE COVERS AND PPE

UCI has made it a priority to offer items that will help your organization stay safe as more employees return to work. Have your logo, or message, printed on some of these safety PPE items which help you and your staff stay safe during this difficult time. COVID-19 has changed the way we interact and a few simple efforts can have a huge impact!



STUDENT DESKS

Our schools are facing the unique problem of re-opening while trying to keep our kids safe. Social distancing needs to be taken into account and the schools need to find a way to educate the same number of kids without the addition of more classrooms. To help meet the unique demands our schools are facing, UCI has developed 2 new Student Desks that maximize space while keeping everyone safe.

The Student Desk w/Cubbies offers a new look for the classroom and gives the kids a bit of personal storage space for their things.



The Student Desk w/T-Leg has a fun design to help set your classroom apart. By replacing the Cubbies with a T-leg, this desk option is a bit cheaper to help you stay on budget when ordering large quantities.



MISSION

Utah Correctional Industries is dedicated to public safety through innovative career building, community partnerships, and quality production to develop successful people.

VISION

Building a better community through career development.

DID YOU KNOW UCI ALSO OFFERS...

PRINTING | EMBROIDERY/SCREEN PRINTING
FURNITURE | SEATING/UPHOLSTERY
CONSTRUCTION | DOCUMENT SCANNING
SIGNAGE | SEWING

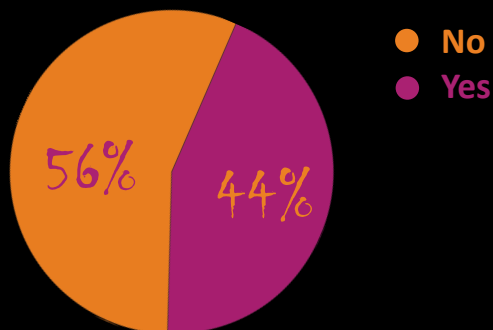
View the "UCI First" State Use Law (63G-6a-804)

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US AT 801-576-7700
UCI.UTAH.GOV

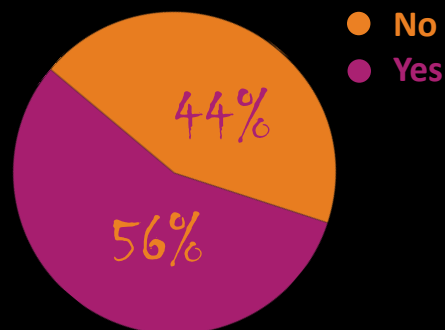
Halloween Survey

By State Purchasing

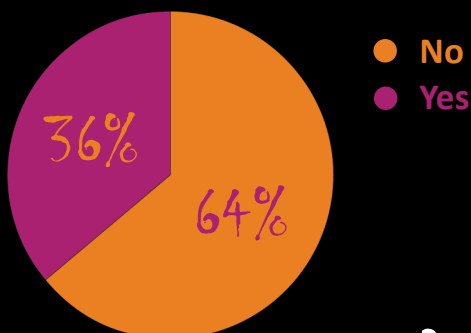
Are you dressing up for Halloween this year?



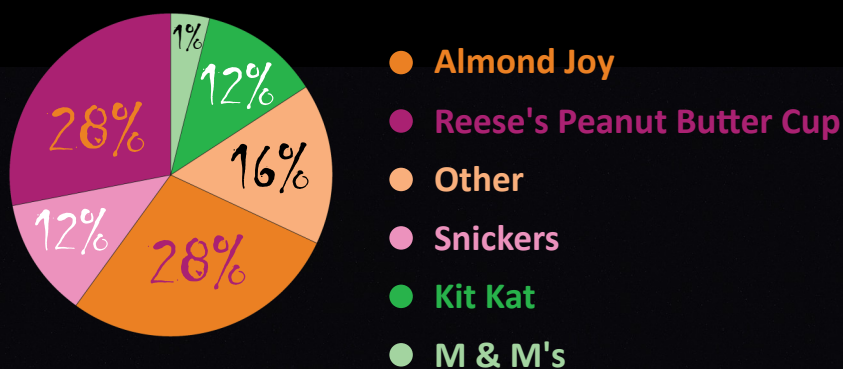
Do you get scared easily?



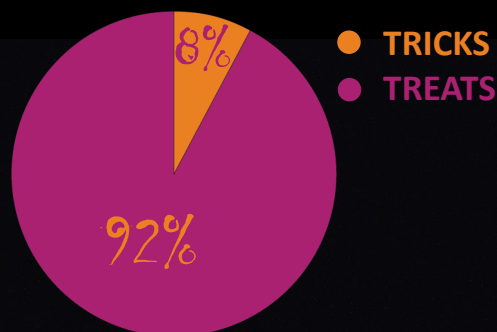
Do you watch scary movies?



What is your favorite Halloween candy?



Do you prefer TRICKS or TREATS?



Spotlight Article



Michael Glenn

Michael Glenn has been with State Purchasing for a little over two years. Since COVID-19 began, Michael was pulled into the State's Unified Command Task Force to help in the response. He has been overseeing the distribution of PPE through the central distribution center as well as working towards getting the state to a 90 day inventory of PPE. This has been a big step outside the normal requirements of a contract analyst, but it has been a good challenge to be involved in.

When not working, Michael enjoys getting outside for a variety of activities, but he and his wife really like to mountain bike and snowboard depending on the time of year. They enjoy traveling around the state to ride new areas and trails. Moab is one of their favorite places to visit in Utah for camping, biking, and even snowboarding in the La Sals.

Q and A

Q: If you were forced to buy a snack from a gas station what would it be?

A: It would for sure be a real sugar coke (the ones in the glass bottle) and a bag of Chex Mix. That combo hits the spot after some mountain biking or snowboarding. I also would say that I have that snack "forced" upon me almost weekly...

Q: What is the ideal chip to salsa ratio?

A: My wife definitely judges me for this, but I definitely prefer less salsa than chip, unless it's cheese dip. So I'd say a 75% to 25% chip to salsa ratio, but she's more the opposite if not higher the other way.

Q: When is the last time you changed a tire and did it go well or poorly?

A: I haven't changed a car tire in a while, but I have had to change a few bike tires this year and I've fortunately been able to keep riding them.

TOPIC: Purchasing 101 and Small Purchases | **PRESENTER:** Michael G. | **DATE:** 11/19/20 | **TIME:** 12—1 PM

SUMMARY:

- Importance of Government procurement
- Resources and where to find them
- Being a resource vs obstacle within your organization

Small Purchases overview

REGISTRATION: Begins 11/5/2020



How to Receive the Purchasing Update Newsletter

Did you receive this newsletter from a co-worker? Do you want to receive the Purchasing Update directly? Please send an email to Tara Eutsler, teutsler@utah.gov.

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